



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attorney General McGraw Warns Consumers To Be Cautious When Purchasing Gift Cards During This Holiday Season

With "Black Friday" approaching and West Virginia consumers heading to retail outlets across the state, Attorney General Darrell McGraw warns West Virginia consumers to be cautious when purchasing gift cards this holiday shopping season.

Attorney General McGraw stated, "As the holiday shopping season is upon us, I felt it necessary to warn consumers to think twice before purchasing gift cards or gift certificates in the current uncertain economic climate. When retailers file for bankruptcy or close down their stores, many West Virginia citizens could be left with worthless gift cards or certificates. We are suggesting, in the interest of consumer protection, that consumers should avoid purchasing cards from companies in bankruptcy and those with gift cards should use them as soon as possible."

McGraw also warned consumers to beware when purchasing items from a mall kiosk. "Consumers should also be cautious when purchasing a gift card, certificate or even merchandise from a seasonal mall kiosk. Many of these operations are fly-by-night startups that open only during the holidays and close before the New Year."

The Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division receives several complaints each year concerning fly-by-night mall kiosks. Typically, consumers complain that they purchased a gift at these businesses only to find out on Christmas morning that the gift is broken or defective. Sometimes, as early as Christmas Eve, these shops close for good and consumers have nowhere to exchange the defective merchandise.

Any consumer who has questions about gift cards or who may have a complaint against a company concerning a product or service is encouraged to contact Attorney General Darrell McGraw's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-368-8808 or visit his website at www.wvago.gov.

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